NUMBER 2, 1954

CPAC Newsletter

NATIONAL COMMUNITY PLANNING WEEK

JUNE 14th-20th

National figures, T.V., CBC from coast to coast, the Press, through CP, have been alerted and have promised their help to make the general public aware of the necessity of Community Planning.

Planning of the land on which we live is essential for Housing, Circulation, Work, Use of Spare Time, Culture, if we want to escape the costly errors of the past.

Planning Week offers you an excellent opportunity to draw the attention of your local press, by letters, meetings, communiqués, etc., to the needs of adequate planning before important projects are initiated or old errors are repaired. Contact your local Section or your Provincial Division.

Publications Noted

Paralipomena in Town Planning (1951) Approach to Town Planning (1952) Speculations on Town Planning (1953). These are three extremely interesting brochures by Paul Kriesis, published in Athens, recently arrived on our desk. Tackling as it does the most vexious problems of the philosophy of planning, it is extremely stimulating. The bibliography at the end of each article is amazing and for that alone should be on every planner's shelf.

Lake Levels of the Great Lakes. Report of the Select Committee of the Ontario Legislature. This Report, including numerous tables and photographs, studies among other subjects, the effects of erosion on shores and suggests remedies. It is very exhaustive and should be in the hands of all planners interested in the St. Lawrence Waterway.

New Towns Act 1946. Reports of the Development Corporation, 1953, Her Majesty's Stationery Office. This annual report including maps and photographs is a remarkable summary of the progress of New Towns in Great Britain.

Performance Standards in Industrial Zoning, by Dennis O'Harron, Executive Director ASPO. This short paper may be very useful to planners concerned with industrial zoning, in that it attempts to describe standards in: noise, smoke, odor, dust and dirt, noxious gasses, glare and heat, fire hazards, etc., etc. Did you know that industrial sewage wastes were measured in hog-units?

Urban Traffic, a Function of Land Use, by Robert B. Mitchell and Chester Rapkin, Columbia University, is the latest book on traffic problems. Concerned with techniques of collecting information on urban traffic, it goes far beyond the usual traffic count by studying the necessity of people to move, goods to be transported. These necessities are fundamental and are manifestations of organized systems of land-based urban activities.

A Population Forecast for the Kingston Area and the City of Kingston, by City of Kingston Planning Board would have been easier for the "foreigner" if a map with population density was included.

An interesting check on the forecast would be an estimate possible, from the densities allowed on the Master Plan.

Is it a good thing to allow a City to grow uncurbed?

Continued on page five

HUMPHREY CARVER

Humphrey Carver is a member of the CPAC National Council as the representative of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Since he was recently invited to take part in a U.S. Conference on Urban Renewal (sponsored by public administration and planning bodies) we have asked him to give us some explanation of this new feature in the U.S. Housing Act of 1954.

"What is Urban Renewal?"

While we are building new housing at the rate of 100,000 units a year, what is happening to the 3¾ million housing units that we already possess? Have we got a system of national "housekeeping" to maintain our stock of houses in good condition, to replace those that become obsolete and to arrest the process of deterioration?

During this period of tremendous urban expansion in Canada our housing efforts have been concentrated on the *extension* of our towns and cities and we have not been able to apply our money and our building resources to *renewal.* But during this period the processes of deterioration and blight have been insidiously at work.

The U.S. Housing Act 1954

The new housing legislation now being discussed in the United States has focussed attention on the expression "urban renewal". This is a new term in the vocabulary of community planning and one with which we will all become familiar. It appears to embrace three kinds of treatment:

(1) *Redevelopment.* The demolition of slums, the replanning of the site and the building of new housing.

(2) *Conservation.* The salvaging of good housing structures in deteriorating areas and the conversion of them for a useful life.

(3) *Code enforcement.* The adoption of a code of minimum standards by which a municipality can compel owners of housing to keep their property up to required standards of health and safety.

The new U.S. legislation is based on the belief that the federal government should not make grants to cities for slum-clearance and low rental housing unless those cities themselves make serious efforts to arrest the processes of deterioration. To assist this local effort the federal government proposes to set up an "urban renewal service" which would give practical aid and advice in code enforcement and conservation. Where there is evidence of good community planning for urban renewal, grants for slum clearance and housing will be available.

The importance of this approach is that, for the first time, the whole condition of a city's housing and the efforts of urban "housekeeping" and planning are brought within a single view. It is made clear that several different kinds of treatment are necessary to maintain cities in good order. Slum clearance, code enforcement, public housing, private housing, community planning are not rival interests but all essential parts of a whole process.

The U.S. legislation has been brought about by a combination of events. Perhaps the principal factor has been that the enormous spending on defence required a withdrawal of funds from social purposes such as public housing; already public housing construction has been cut from 135,000 units in 1950 to 20,000 units in 1953. There has also been some dissatisfaction with the whole character of the large projects of public housing in which low-income families have been segregated; the wholesale demolition of slum areas and the substitution of barracks-like buildings seemed a crude treatment. At the same time it became clear that it would take about 200 years to overtake the vast and growing extent of American slums by the simple process of clearance and rebuilding; some other devices of conservation had to be found. The kind of housing code enforcement that had been used successfully in Baltimore and New Orleans seemed to offer some prospect of success. Another influence has been the pressures exerted by the real estate and homebuilders organizations who have resisted the growth of public housing and urban redevelopment as a threat to their profitable operations in the extension of cities. These organisations have seized upon code enforcement as a possible substitute for public housing; they have widely publicised the virtues of enforced rehabilitation without perhaps fully realising that this might lead to a bureaucratic invasion of private property even more objectionable than what has been denounced as the "creeping socialism" of public housing.

The Housing Code

Perhaps it is just an accident of history that the "Baltimore Plan" for code enforcement was originally inspired by the example of the City of Toronto's bylaw 14466 of 1936. This provided municipal loans for rehabilitating houses in conformity with a standard required by the city architect's department. It helped to patch up a depressed area in a depression. The bylaw was applied particularly in the area which is now the scene of the Regent Park low-rental housing project. Baltimore borrowed the idea and in recent years has applied it vigorously on a block-by-block basis, using a special Housing Court to enforce its code and a housing officer to direct the process of rehabilitation.

Recently a number of Canadian cities have become interested in what has come to be known as "The Baltimore Plan". Our CPAC branch in Halifax has been advocating the use of a housing code, the Mayor of

Ottawa recently invited the Baltimore housing staff to explain their methods to local citizens, Winnipeg established a Housing Commission for this purpose in 1949 and the Vancouver Housing Association has been making similar proposals. So there is evidently a need to consolidate and exchange our Canadian views and experiences in this important sector of housing policy.

Though the expression "urban renewal" in the American legislation includes the practice of code enforcement, the term also points up the ultimate purpose of "renewing" rather than simply "maintaining" or rehabilitating old housing. There is a good deal of evidence that a repaired and rehabilitated slum area still remains a slum, and that this simply postpones the necessary process of redevelopment and rebuilding. The evidence also seems to show that the reconstruction and conversion of slum buildings to an extent that would permanently raise them above the level of slums is an expensive process. American experience seems to show that it is usually cheaper in the end to scrap and replace rather than put good money into bad houses. Houses of solid masonry construction such as the typical row-housing of Baltimore and the 19th century "bylaw" housing of English industrial cities may lend themselves to reconstruction, but what of the frame-houses typical of slum areas in our maritime cities? Obviously there must be some careful judgment in embarking on a system of code enforcement which simply patches up and substantiates a low-standard of housing.

Measures of conservation seem to be most usefully applicable to residential areas which contain buildings of sound construction that are threatened with deterioration. In every Canadian city there is an area of fine old houses of the Victorian and Edwardian era left behind by the first tide of urban expansion and now threatened by the later surge of commercial growth and the blight of central traffic. Many of them are converted to lodging houses and apartments and they have become the principal source of accommodation for old people. In many cases these areas are near to a University campus, a fine park or a group of institutional buildings which give them a key place in a city plan. Zoning and traffic control can protect such areas and a positive conservation policy could attract new investment to convert the residences to a new and important function in the city's housing stock. This kind of conservation, however, does not provide low-rental housing but a type of accommodation more suitable for middle-income and high-income single people and couples.

Planning for Renewal

As we look around at the extensive areas of post-war suburban growth, we cannot help perceiving that good development does not happen by accident, but by design. Where there has been no plan the private developers of housing, commerce and industry have become entangled in confusion, ugliness and disorder. Profiting from our mistakes, however, Canadian cities have now discovered that there are workable methods for planning new residential neighbourhoods, shopping centres and industrial sites. The know-how of community planning in new suburban areas may have arrived late but is now generally recognised.

In the process of urban renewal we have not yet found a planning technique and yet this is a form of urban growth which is even less likely to produce satisfactory results by accident. It is comparatively easy to project new urban developments on the green fields and open spaces on the fringes of cities; but the land in the interior of cities is divided into a multiplicity of small ownerships and is covered by buildings of all types and in all stages of use and decay. Consequently public and private investment is not attracted to any area whose future is an unknown quantity and in which there is no assurance that changes will be for the better rather than for the worse. In these circumstances some form of positive and resolute community planning is required to provide a framework for the process of renewal.

To overcome this difficulty the new American housing legislation has adopted the idea of "urban renewal areas" in place of the previously recognised "urban redevelopment areas". These are to be the sites for concentrated action through the combined methods of clearance and rebuilding, conservation and code-enforcement. Within such areas, replanned and protected, it may then be possible to attract both public and private funds for investment in various types of new housing and for the conservation and reconstruction of good existing housing. Only in this way can areas of "decline" be raised into areas of "ascendency" and the whole fabric of an urban area be rejuvenated piece by piece, systematically.

The U.S. Housing Administration will make advances of funds to support the urban renewal plans of municipalities which—

(1) Plan to carry out a programme of voluntary repair and rehabilitation of buildings.

(2) Plan to enforce local codes and regulations relating to the use and occupancy of buildings and the compulsory repair and demolition of buildings.

(3) Undertake appraisals, title searches and other preliminary work in preparation for the acquisition of land.

Apart from such financial assistance towards the general renewal operation, the usual financial arrangements will be available for the financing of various types of housing construction.

Canadian cities are still actively engaged in the process of extension and we have not yet had to re-deploy our forces for renewal. Our maritime and large eastern cities are, however, entering a period when policies of renewal must become more realistic. Undoubtedly the application of the new legislation in the United States will be watched with keen interest as we sharpen our own tools for code-enforcement, conservation and redevelopment. Particularly we will watch with interest what happens in St. John's, Saint John, Halifax, Montreal and Toronto where attention has already turned in this direction.

Every year we add a little less than 3 per cent to our total stock of housing and discussions of Canadian housing policy have been almost entirely devoted to the methods of financing this increment. What is the condition of the remaining 97 per cent of our housing stock and what measures can we devise for systematic conservation and replacement?

The U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency has published (December 1953) a booklet entitled "Local Development and Enforcement of Housing Codes". This provides a general review of the purpose of housing codes and gives detailed descriptions of the systems used in Baltimore and other U.S. cities.

Who's Who

ROBERT T. DONALD, M.B.E., Q.C.

Mr. Robert T. Donald, M.B.E., Q.C., who has been Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Association for the past two years, is a native Nova Scotian who finally came to the conclusion, after many long years, that the greener pastures of Ontario could no longer be ignored. About three years ago the Ontario Division learned that one of the powers in planning from the Maritimes had settled in Toronto, and immediate steps were taken to involve him in the Division. Thus continuity has been maintained.

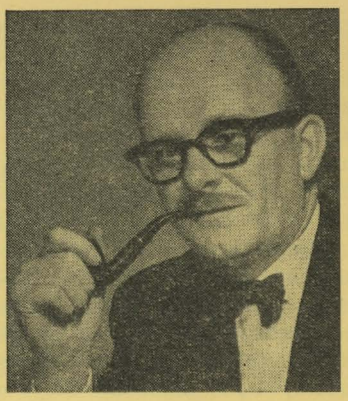
Bob Donald is a quiet, soft-spoken young man, in his mid-forties one would judge, whose skill at chairmanship and firm determination is respected by Council Members from coast to coast. He is a lawyer, a graduate of Dalhousie University in Arts and from the Dalhousie Law School with the LLB. degree. In the depth of the depression he began to practice law in Halifax, first from 1933 to 1941 and again from 1946 to 1949.

When the war came along his talents were soon recognized and by 1942 he had joined the Department of Munitions and Supply in Ottawa, first as a member of the Legal Division and later as Secretary of the Department. He remained for four years in these arduous duties and for his services was awarded the M.B.E. by His Majesty in 1946. Soon after his return to Halifax, he was made a King's Counsel.

In Nova Scotia, Mr. Donald's voluntary interests included the Junior Board of Trade of Halifax of which he was a President, and the Community Planning Association. By 1948 he had been elected Chairman of the Nova Scotia Division and served for two years until he accepted a position in Ontario.

In 1950-51 our Chairman joined the staff of one of the largest Canadian corporations, Brazilian Traction, Light and Power Co. Ltd., and most recently he has been appointed Secretary of that company. His association with C.P.A.C. has not flagged, however, and since 1950 he has served as a member of the National Council. Two years ago the Council selected him, unanimously, as its Executive Committee Chairman.

A. R.



JACQUES SIMARD

Jacques Simard is a practical man. He didn't join the Community Planning Association of Canada because he thought it a worthy cause that deserved his support. He jumped feet first into CPAC a few years back because he needed help in planning a new townsite.

In the four years since, Simard has become a planning authority, mayor of his new town of Preville, and also executive director of CPAC.

It all began when the Simards decided to develop the family estate which was to become the town of Preville. Eldest son Jacques had just become interested in CPAC, and after attending the Ottawa conference in 1950 he enrolled in Prof. Harold Spence-Sales' planning course at McGill. He had decided that Preville, a mile and a quarter square block just across the Victoria Bridge from Montreal, was to become a model, well planned, community.

At 48, Jacques Simard is a graduate of French Canada's traditional schooling in the humanities as well as Harvard's Graduate School of Business Administration.

As a Canadian whose family was living here in the seventeenth century, he is a respecter of traditions both old and new. As a Canadian of the 20th century, he believes that progress is here to stay and that one must make proper plans to live with it. As a man who has learned to enjoy the blessings of both noble and peasant, he wears hand woven ties and packs his pipe with tabac canadien. As art student and businessman, he has evolved the ability to combine fine theory and practice, and as son of the man who conceived Quebec's first highway, he's a man of action who confesses to some impatience at the slowly grinding mills.

Simard is today holding down two full time jobs. As executive director of CPAC, he packs a full work week into three days at his Ottawa office. As mayor of Preville, he tackles the week's civic business in another three days. In theory, but not always in practice, the seventh day is spent with his family.

Preville is today a planned community at the edge of a group of more or less unplanned south shore municipalities. The keen mayor's most recent success has been to bring together the mayors of 16 county towns to begin the working out of large scale planning for the entire region.

P. S.

Avaliable for Planning Work

Architect (Beaux-Arts, Vienna, Architectural Association, London, England) 15 years architectural, engineering and planning experience. Salary $4-5000. I. E. Orton, 99 Gilmour Street, Ottawa.

Announcing

The International Federation for Housing and Town Planning states that a Congress on Slum Clearance and Rehousing; Housing Density; National Land Use Planning, will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland, from September 20th to 26th.

Wanted: Senior Planner

Senior planner required by the London and Suburban Planning Board, London, Ontario, for preparing physical phases of comprehensive plan and supervising routine subdivision and zoning work—Graduate in planning, civil engineering or architecture preferred—Salary in accordance with experience and training.

State qualifications, references and salary to The Planning Director, London and Suburban Planning Board, Municipal Offices, London, Ontario.

Divisional Activities

Newfoundland

The Newfoundland Division held its Annual Meeting on May 14th. The meeting took the form of a dinner at the Newfoundland Hotel. Some 40 members and guests were present including His Honour the Lieutenant Governor. A report of the progress made during the past year was given by the Chairman, Sir Brian Dunfield. Sir Brian stressed the necessity of every city and town having professional planning staff. He noted in particular that Newfoundland had a joint planning office whereby planning advice, under the Urban and Rural Planning Act, could be given to a small municipality.

Sir Brian Dunfield and Eric Cook, Q.C., were re-elected as National Councillors for the coming year.

Nova Scotia

The Nova Scotia Division held its Annual Meeting on May 5th. Mr. J. P. Dumaresq and Mr. J. I. McVittie were appointed National Councillors for the coming year.

Mr. D. F. MacIsaac, Chairman of the Division, noted in his annual report that the Division's greatest effort had been directed towards developing closer co-operation between various departments of the Provincial Government and Municipal Councils in an endeavour to help them understand more clearly their role in community development.

Ontario

A very successful Joint Planning Conference was held in Toronto on May 6th, 7th and 8th, sponsored by the Ontario Division of CPAC and the Town Planning Institute of Canada. Over two hundred people were present.

The Annual Meeting of the Ontario Division was held on May 6th with Dr. Albert Rose as chairman.

Mr. P. A. Deacon and Dr. Albert Rose were re-elected National Councillors for the coming year.

British Columbia

A very successful conference was held on May 14th at Prince George sponsored by the City Council and the Town Planning Commission and supported by the Board of Trade and many service clubs of the City. Some of the topics under discussion at this conference were Planning Opportunities under the B.C. Law, Planning for the Growing Community, Rights of the Citizen and Rights of the Community, Agricultural Settlement and Industry in a Growing Area.

The British Columbia Division and the Vancouver Branch will be holding their Annual Meetings in the Georgian Hotel on June 17th. These Meetings are being held in conjunction with National Community Planning Week.

Alberta

The Alberta Division is in the midst of preparations for its annual General Meeting and Conference to be held at the Y.M.C.A. in Edmonton on June 18th and 19th. This conference and annual Meeting are being held during National Community Planning Week. One feature of the proposed program will be the presentation of progress reports from various Alberta Towns working under a plan proposed by the Provincial Town and Rural Planning Branch. Representatives from such towns as Tofield, Stettler, Bonnyville, Grande Prairie, Brooks and Wainwright will be present.

Manitoba

A Practical Planning Institute for the benefit of the municipalities throughout the Province will be held in Winnipeg on June 14th and 15th during National Community Planning Week. As a special feature of the Institute the Metropolitan Planning Commission of Greater Winnipeg is conducting a bus tour of the planned development in the Greater Winnipeg area.

Quebec

The Sherbrooke Section of CPAC is asking for support to second their demand to City Council for a Planning Consultant to draw up a Master Plan. A future population of 100,000 is forecast for this fast growing city.

The Quebec Division recently published and distributed copies of the six radio talks given by Mr. Jacques Simard, Mr. Benoit Begin, Mr. Albert Cote, C. E. Campeau, the Honorable Yves Prevost, Minister for Municipal Affairs and Mr. Jean Cimon.

Saskatchewan

Congratulations are in order for the newly formed Saskatchewan Division. This now gives the Community Planning Assoiation of Canada a Division in all ten provinces.

Prince Edward Island

The Annual Meeting took place on June 3rd. Over 200 people attended the Annual dinner.

Publications Noted . . .

Continued from page one

Town Design, by Frederick Gibberd. This is a very beautiful book containing innumerable photographs, plans, drawings to help the education of the eye, the judge in Town Design.

The four parts of the book, each terminated by analyses of representative implementations are: Design of the Complete Town, Central Areas, Industry, Housing.

The author is responsible for the design of a number of major urban schemes and therefore well qualified to fill this gap in town planning literature.

The City of Man, by Christopher Tunnard. This book should make fascinating reading in parallel with *Town Design*. Gibberd's book is understandably concerned with European background while Tunnard's passes on, as soon as possible, to our American experience. This book also has four parts: In search of a City, Tradition and Experiment, Modern Civic Art, an approach to Civic Design.

The author hails from British Columbia and is currently Associate Professor of City Planning and Director of the Graduate Program in City Planning at Yale University.

Survival Through Design, by Richard Neutra is a stimulating if controversial book. It is the philosophy of the author's life in respect to problems which he had to face as an architect. His emphasis on science may sound a little too insistent to ears tuned to the spreading spiritual renaissance. Contrary to the two books on design noted above, this one projects its ideas without a single picture.

NUMÉRO 2, 1954

Les Nouvelles de l'A.C.U.

SEMAINE NATIONALE DE L'URBANISME
JUIN 14-20

Personnages importants, télévision, la radio d'un océan à l'autre, la presse par ses agences, tout le monde est au courant et ont promis leur concours pour alerter le public sur la nécessité de l'Urbanisme.

L'aménagement du sol sur lequel nous vivons est essentiel pour le logement, la circulation, le travail, les loisirs et la culture si nous voulons éviter les erreurs coûteuses du passé.

La Semaine de l'Urbanisme vous offre une excellente occasion d'attirer l'attention de votre Journal par lettres, assemblées, communiqués, etc., sur la nécessité d'une étude suffisante avant d'entreprendre des projets importants pour l'avenir ou de réparer des erreurs du passé. Mettez-vous en relation avec votre section locale ou votre Division provinciale.

CPAC Newsletter

(See verso)

PUBLISHED BY COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF CANADA 169 SOMERSET ST. W., OTTAWA, CANADA

Qu'est ce que le rajeunissment urbain?

Humphrey Carver est membre attitré de la Société Centrale d'Hypothèque et de Logement au Conseil National de l'ACU. Comme il a récemment été invité à une Conférence aux E.U. sur le rejeunissement urbain (sous l'égide de groupes intéressés dans l'administration et l'aménagement) nous lui avons demandé de nous parler de cet aspect nouveau du U.S. Housing Act of 1954.

Pendant que nous construisons 100,000 nouveaux logements par année, comment se comportent les 3¾ millions de logements que nous avons déjà? Avons-nous un système national pour entretenir notre stock de maisons en bon état, remplacer celles qui deviennent désuètes et controler le processus de détérioration?

Pendant cette période d'énorme expansion urbaine au Canada, nos efforts dans la direction du logement se sont concentrés dans l'agrandissement de nos cités et villes et nous n'avons pas trouvé le moyen d'appliquer notre argent et nos ressources à les renover. Ce qui n'a pas empêché entre temps la détérioration et la déchéance de faire son œuvre.

Le U.S. Housing Act 1954

Les commentaires sur la nouvelle législation américaine attirent l'attention sur l'expression "rajeunissement urbain" (urban renewal). Voilà un nouveau terme dans le vocabulaire de l'urbaniste que ne manquera pas de devenir familier. Il laisse entendre trois sortes de traitement:

1) *Réaménagement.* Démolition des quartiers insalubres, nouvel aménagement de la zone, construction de nouveaux logements.

2) *Conservation.* La récupération des logements à charpente solide dans les quartiers dépréciés et leur rénovation pour les rendre utilisables.

3) *Application des règlements.* L'adoption de règlements de construction minima par lesquels la municipalité peut forcer le propriétaire du logement à l'entretenir au niveau convenable de sécurité et de salubrité.

La nouvelle loi américaine est basée sur la conception que le gouvernement fédéral ne doit prêter aux villes pour l'élimination des quartiers insalubres et pour le logement à bon marché que si ces dernières ont véritablement fait un effort pour contrôler le processus de détérioration. Afin de venir en aide à l'autorité locale, le gouvernement fédéral propose la création d'un "service de rajeunissement urbain" chargé d'aider et de conseiller dans l'application des règlements. Là où l'on pourra constater un effort collectif pour la réhabilitation de la ville on pourra compter sur des subventions pour l'élimination des quartiers insalubres et leur reconstruction.

L'importance de ce point de vue tient dans le fait que pour la première fois le problème urbain du logement de même que l'entretein et l'aménagement sont envisagés comme un tout. Il est évident que des soins divers sont nécessaires pour conserver la ville en bon état. Elimination des taudis, mise en force des règlements, habitation subventionnée, habitation privée, aménagement communal ne s'opposent pas mais sont bien les parties essentielles d'un tout.

La loi américaine est due à un ensemble de circonstances. Le principal facteur est probablement le fait que les dépenses énormes pour la défense ont comprimé les budgets à fins sociales, tel l'habitation subventionnée; déja le programme d'habitation a été diminué de 135,000 unités en 1950 à 20,000 en 1953. En outre, on n'était pas trop satisfait par l'esprit des grand projets d'habitation ou les familles moins riche étaient mises à part; la démolition intégrale des taudis pour les remplacer par des casernes semblait primitif. En même temps, on constata que 200 ans ne suffiraient pas pour refaire les quartiers insalubres par le procédé élémentaire de démolition et reconstruction; un autre moyen s'imposait. Le genre de règlement de construction mis en vigueur avec succès à Baltimore et à la Nouvelle Orléans, semblait promettre des avantages. Une autre influence fut les pressions exercées par les constructeurs et les agents d'immeubles qui s'opposaient aux programmes de logement subventionnés par crainte de voir leurs opérations profitables diminuer. Ces organisations ont acquiescé aux programmes de mise en force de règlements de construction comme substitut à l'habitation subventionnée; ils ont hautement vanté les avantages de la réhabilitation sans peut-être se douter que celâ pouvait entrainer une ingérence bureaucratique dans la propriété privée peut-être pire que le "socialisme insidieux" dénoncé comme au fond de l'habitation subventionnée.

Le règlement de construction

Il n'y a peut-être qu'une coïncidence historique dans le fait que le "Baltimore Plan" s'était au début inspiré du règlement 14466 passé par la Cité de Toronto en 1936. Ce règlement prévoyait un prêt municipal pour réhabiliter les maisons selon un standard établi par le département de l'architecte municipal. Il servit à donner un coup de main à une zone à bout de ressources pendant la dépression. Ce règlement s'appliqua surtout à la zone qui aujourd'hui est connue comme le "Regent Park low-rental housing project". Baltimore emprunta l'idée et, pendant ces dernières années l'a appliqué avec vigueur de bloc en bloc, aidée d'une cour spéciale pour mettre en force le règlement ainsi qu'un officier pour diriger le processus de réhabilitation.

Récemment, quelques villes canadiennes ont manifesté de l'intérêt pour ce qui aujourd'hui porte le nom de "Baltimore Plan". Notre section de Halifax recommande la mise en vigueur d'un règlement de construction, la mairesse d'Ottawa invitait récemment le personnel compétent de Baltimore à venir expliquer leurs méthodes aux citoyens, Winnipeg a crée une Commission du Logement dans le même ordre d'idées dès 1949, et la "Vancouver Housing Association" se propose la même chose. Il y a donc avantage à échanger et consolider nos idées et nos expériences dans ce chapître important de notre politique de l'habitation.

Même si le terme "urban renewal" dans la loi américaine comprend la mise en vigueur du règlement de construction il laisse entendre plus que l'entretien et la réhabilitation des vieilles maisons. Il est à peu près certain que des quartiers insalubres même réparés et réhabilités demeurent quartiers insalubres et qu'on ne fait que remettre l'échéance de la démolition et de la reconstruction. On sait aussi que la réfection et l'amélioration des taudis au delà de leur niveau insalubres est un procédé dispendieux. L'expérience américaine prouve qu'il vaut mieux démolir et rebâtir qu'investir son argent dans la maison condamnée. Les maisons en pierre comme les maisons mitoyennes typiques de Baltimore et le produit du "by-law housing" anglais dans les villes industrielles du

XIXième siècle, peuvent se prêter à la reconstruction, mais que dire des maisons de bois typiques des quartiers insalubres de nos villes côtières. De toute évidence, on ne peut s'embarquer sans mure réflection dans la mise en vigueur d'un règlement de construction qui ne fait que replâtrer et perpétuer un niveau inférieur d'habitation.

Les mesures de conservation semblent plus utile dans les quartiers résidentiels dont les maisons solides sont menacées de se détériorer. Dans la plupart des villes canadiennes on remarque des quartiers de vieilles maisons Victoriennes ou Edouardiennes dépassées par les premières vagues d'expansion urbaines, maintenant menacées par une marée de commercialisation et la tare du trafic central. La tendance est d'en faire des maisons de chambres ou petites appartements, principale source de logement des gens âgés. Souvent ces maisons sont dans les environs d'une Université, d'un parc ou d'un groupe de bâtiments spécialisés, ce qui leur confère une place d'importance dans le plan de la Cité. Par le zonage et le controle du trafic, une certaine protection peut être assurée à ces quartiers et une politique sérieuse de conservation peut attirer le capital nécessaire pour moderniser ces vieilles résidences et leur redonner une place d'importance dans l'inventaire de l'habitation de la ville. Ce genre de conversion toutefois n'arrive pas au loyer modique, mais fournit ce qu'il faut aux couples et aux célibataires de revenu moyen ou même élevé.

Prévoir pour rajeunir

Si l'on jette un coup d'œil sur l'étendue de l'accroissement de la banlieue depuis la guerre, il faut se rendre à l'évidence que les développements les mieux réussis ne sont pas l'effet du hasard, mais bien d'un aménagement réfléchi. Là où il n'y avait pas de direction, les entrepreneurs en logement, en commerce et en industrie se sont empêtrés dans la confusion, la laideur, le désordre. Profitant de ces erreurs, nos villes canadiennes ont trouvé le chemin d'un aménagement communal qui sait faire la part au logement, au commerce, à l'industrie. Le savoir faire en aménagement communal a pu arriver un peu tard, mais il est maintenant généralement admis.

On n'a pas encore trouvé la formule pour rajeunir la ville et cependant voila bien un aspect du développement urbain qui ne s'accomode guère de l'à peu près. C'est relativement facile d'implanter un nouveau développement dans les champs verts et non bâtis à la périphérie des villes; mais le sol à l'intérieur de la ville est réparti en d'innombrables propriétaires, bâti d'édifices de tous genre, à tous usages et de tout âge. Rien de surprenant si les placements privés ou publics hésitent là où l'avenir est incertain et où le changement peut aller vers le pire plutôt que vers le mieux. Dans de telles circonstances, une méthode positive et ferme d'aménagement est essentielle pour tracer les cadres du rajeunissement.

Pour obvier à ces difficultés, la législation américaine prévoit des zones de rajeunissement urbaines (urban renewal areas) à la place des zones de réaménagement urbaines connues (urban redevelopment areas). On y concentrera les méthodes combinées de démolition et reconstruction, conservation et mise en force des règlements de construction. Dans ces zones, réaménagées et protégées, il devrait être possible dorénavant d'intéresser la finance, tant publique que privée, dans divers types de logement moderne autant que pour la conservation et la rénovation des bâtiments sains. Voila le seule façon de transformer une zone en déclin en une zone ascendante, de rajeunir l'ossature d'une ville, systématiquement, pièce à pièce.

La "U.S. Housing Administration" avancera des fonds pour appuyer le rajeunissement urbain aux municipalités qui–

(1) Ont l'intention d'exécuter un programme de réparations bénévoles et de rénovations du bâtiment.

(2) Ont l'intention de faire observer les règlements de construction concernant l'usage et l'occupation du bâtiment ainsi que sa réparation ou sa démolition obligatoire.

(3) Entreprennent les expertises, les examens de titres et autres nécessités préliminaires à l'acquisition du terrain.

En plus de l'assistance financière nécessaire au rajeunissement général, les ententes habituelles sont disponibles pour financer la contruction de divers types de logement.

Nos villes canadiennes sont encore absorbées par la nécessité de s'agrandir et elles n'ont pas eu encore à se réorganiser pour se rajeunir. Nos villes cotières et nos grandes villes de l'est cependant sont à l'aube d'une ère où les méthodes de rajeunissement devront s'avérér plus réalistes. Il est certain qu'on suivra de près la nouvelle législation américaine pendant qu'on étudiera nos moyens pour affermir nos règlements de construction, de conservation et de redéveloppement. En particulier l'attention se portera sur St. John's, Saint Jean N.B., Halifax, Montréal et Toronto, villes déjà alertées.

Chaque année nous ajoutons un peu moins de 3% au total du bâtiment, et les discussions sur la politique canadienne du logement ont presqu'invariablement porté sur la façon de financier cette augmentation. En quel état se trouve le 97% du bâtiment et comment doit-on s'organiser systématiquement pour le conserver et le remplacer?

La U.S. Housing and Home Finance Agency vient de publier (décembre 1953) un fascicule intitulé "Local Development and Enforcement of Housing Codes". Ce fascicule traite en général des buts des règlements concernant l'habitation et donne une description détaillée du système en usage à Baltimore et ailleurs aux E.U.

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